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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
Raised H.B. 6294: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE REQUIREMENT OF A DONATION OF LAND AS A CONDITION OF SUBDIVISION APPROVAL.	Opposed

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 127 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various sustainable forestry, State Park and Forest, trail recreation, and land conservation issues.

I am testifying today to express CFPA's opposition to Raised H.B. 6294, "An Act Prohibiting the Requirement of a Donation of Land as a Condition of Subdivision Approval."

In general, CFPA supports municipalities having access to a wide variety of tools to conserve forests, parks, recreational trails, and meet other local goals. Retaining access for municipalities to a wide variety of tools makes sense given the diversity across the broad rural-to-urban spectrum of municipal needs and interests that we have in Connecticut. Across that spectrum, some municipalities have a lack of open space, and in that instance, having the ability to require an open space set-aside can be an important tool that can accommodate both population growth and conservation goals. If municipalities have ample open space, they do not need to utilize this open space option.

Many municipalities have a shortage of open space resources for their citizens to access, and we are still considerably behind in our statutory goal to achieve 21% open space protection statewide. In that context, we believe the important tool of requiring an open space set-aside as part of the subdivision approval process should not be removed from the local planning toolbox that allows municipalities to address multiple goals simultaneously.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am glad to respond to any questions you may have.